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Item 9 of the provisional agenda*
Partnership dialogues

Making fisheries sustainable

Concept paper prepared by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present concept paper for the partnership dialogue on the theme "Making fisheries sustainable", prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/303, covers targets 14.4 and 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The paper is based on inputs received from Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations system and other stakeholders.[1]

2. More than 3 billion people rely on fish as an important source of animal protein and 300 million people rely on marine fisheries for their livelihoods. In developing and developed countries alike, the consumption of fish is increasing both per capita and in absolute terms.

II. Status and trends

3. In 2014 total capture production in marine waters was 81.5 million tons, a slight increase on the previous two years, with 13 out of the 25 major fishing countries increasing their catches by more than 100,000 tons compared to 2013. According to the analysis by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) of assessed commercial fish stocks, the share of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels decreased from 90 per cent in 1974 to 69 per cent in 2013.[2] Overfishing, including discards, destructive fishing practices and "ghost

* A/CONF.230/1.

[1] Given the word limit not all inputs have been included in their entirety, but they can be accessed at https://oceanconference.un.org/documents.

[2] FAO, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2016: contributing to food security and*

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fishing" (killing fish as a result of discarded or lost equipment) lead to a loss of $80 billion annually in potential revenue.[3]

4. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, a severe stress on global fisheries, is responsible for approximately 11 million to 26 million tons of fish catches and $10 billion to $22 billion in revenue.[4] Although emphasis is often put on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities occurring in areas under national jurisdiction, it is also a serious concern on the high seas.

5. Aquaculture production, a rapidly growing sector, currently provides half of the fish products covered in global statistics and, in this regard, States and regions should be encouraged to have effective governance and regulatory arrangements in place to support sustainable development.

6. Fish and fisheries are important to livelihoods and food security and nutrition. It is estimated that fish accounts for 17 per cent of animal protein and 6.7 per cent of all protein consumed globally. Millions of people around the world find a source of income and livelihood in fisheries and in the aquaculture sector. Estimates indicate that 56.6 million people are engaged in the primary sector of capture fisheries and aquaculture. In 2014, small-scale fisheries provided work to 90 per cent of the people employed in capture fisheries.[2]

7. Such trends must be examined against the backdrop of climate change. Warming oceans are changing the behaviour of fish stocks, generally pushing them towards the poles and to deeper water, as well as changing the metabolic rates, range and reproductive capacity of some species. Sea level rise endangers mangroves and sea grasses that protect coastal fisheries, and coral bleaching and other climate change-induced natural phenomena threaten the fish stocks that depend on reefs for survival.

8. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, States, individually and through regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements, are working to restore fisheries, taking a precautionary approach when complete data are not available. They are developing conservation and management measures to reduce overfishing through science-based management plans and harvest regulation, and through regulations, policies and tools to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices.

9. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, sets out the rights and duties of States in the different maritime zones for the conservation and management of marine living resources. The rights over fisheries referred to in the Convention are accompanied by concordant obligations to conserve and manage fish stocks, for example, by requiring coastal States to determine the total allowable catch of the living resources in their exclusive economic zones and to cooperate in the case of shared stocks and contiguous areas. Collaboration among States also takes place at the global level in accordance with other international instruments that support sustainable fisheries, including both binding and voluntary commitments, for example, the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of

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nutrition for all (Rome, 2016).

[3] Kieran Kelleher, "Discards in the world's marine fisheries. An update", FAO Fisheries Technical Paper, No. 470 (Rome, FAO. 2005).

[4] United Nations, "The First Global Integrated Marine Assessment: World Ocean Assessment I" 2016. Available from http://www.un.org/Depts/los/global_reporting/WOA_RPROC/WOACompilation.pdf.

Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (1995 Fish Stocks Agreement), the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing of FAO and the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments also of FAO, as well as through regional agreements and organizations. Nationals of other States fishing within the exclusive economic zone are required to comply with the conservation measures and other terms and conditions established by the coastal State.

10. Similarly, the right of vessels from all States to fish on the high seas is accompanied by an obligation for States to take, or cooperate with other States in taking, measures for their respective nationals, that are necessary for the conservation of the living resources of the high seas and to cooperate with each other in the conservation and management of such resources.

11. The Convention also requires cooperation in the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. This duty to cooperate is given effect to, and elaborated upon, through an implementing agreement to the Convention, the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement. However, the provisions relating to the conservation and management of fish stocks are not fully implemented, as overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices continue to challenge the sustainability of fisheries around the world.

12. While the overall trend regarding the sustainability of fisheries is overwhelmingly negative, some progress has been made with regard to the sustainability of some fish stocks, particularly through effective regulation and monitoring. A number of actions are being taken to improve the sustainability of fish stocks, including through increasing the understanding of resources and the ecosystems they inhabit, strengthening the institutions responsible for the management of fisheries, improving regulatory regimes, increasing compliance and addressing the economic and social factors that contribute to overfishing. Increased attention is also being paid to improving the overall health and resilience of marine ecosystems to maintain and improve their yield in the face of increasing anthropogenic stressors.

13. Significant progress has been made in the identification of vulnerable marine ecosystem indicator species and in the development of conservation and management measures to protect those ecosystems, including those of bottom fisheries and deep-sea fish stocks. The measures include threshold levels for vulnerable marine ecosystem indicator species, move-on rules and temporary or permanent closures, closed areas (including those with vulnerable ecosystems), restrictions on vessel types and time spent fishing, restrictions on legal mesh sizes and the size of fish that can be caught, restrictions on by-catch, catch and effort reporting, gear restrictions, measures for exploratory fisheries, precautionary catch limits and prohibitions on directed fishing. Regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and States are cooperating on marine scientific research and data collection and capacity-building activities for developing States (A/71/351).

14. Subsidies and other types of support measures to the fishing industry are granted for a variety of purposes. In many cases, they are not directed at increasing fishing capacity or effort as such. They can, if properly designed, support crew safety; support fish processing by local populations; enable value addition; facilitate the establishment of fish stocks management systems; finance less harmful fishing methods; and promote the adoption of more sustainable technologies, and therefore provide for the restoration and rehabilitation of ecosystems. On the other hand, many fisheries subsidies actively contribute to overcapacity and the depletion of fish stocks, and subsidies can be damaging and trade distorting even in effectively

managed fisheries. Subsidies that encourage overcapacity and overfishing result in losses for States, and those losses are often borne by communities that are dependent on fishery resources for their livelihood and their food security, and by taxpayers.[5] Subsidies may benefit industrial fleets or, even, in some cases, illegal activities. Subsidies that contribute to the depletion of coastal fisheries cause fishing fleets and enterprises to look further and fish deeper beyond the territorial sea. Consequently, subsidized capacity and effort may be diverted to new species and areas, which can perpetuate some of the aforementioned problems.

15. Data on subsidies are subject to debate. Several direct estimates of subsidies and financial transfers to the fisheries sector have been made, with a 2016 study placing total subsidies at about $35 billion in 2009 dollars, of which $20 billion is categorized as harmful or capacity-enhancing subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing.[5] Between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of the total global subsidy is provided by developed countries.

16. After more than 16 years of negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO), no agreement has yet been reached on a multilateral framework to regulate fisheries subsidies. WTO members recently entered a period of renewed activity, with members, including the European Union, the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and a group of Latin American States, submitting new proposals. In addition to the WTO negotiations, other international and regional initiatives have been advanced over the past two years. At the tenth Ministerial Conference of WTO in December 2015, a group of 26 WTO members issued a joint statement calling for the prohibition of subsidies that contribute to overfishing and overcapacity, and subsidies linked to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, in line with target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In September 2016, a group of 12 WTO members launched an initiative to prohibit harmful subsidies through plurilateral negotiations in WTO.

17. Some Governments are starting to introduce national reforms to reduce subsidies that could contribute to overfishing and overcapacity and to shift their support towards more sustainable and less harmful activities.

18. The adoption of target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals has also stimulated multilateral agencies, individual countries, civil society and academia to further address the issue of subsidies. In the global policy setting, the General Assembly, in its resolution 69/109, recalled that, in "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex), States reaffirmed their commitment in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) to eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and overcapacity, taking into account the importance of the fishing sector to developing countries, and reiterated their commitment to conclude multilateral disciplines on fisheries subsidies. In July 2016, an initiative led by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was launched. The initiative, known as the road map, calls for ending harmful fishing subsidies and delivering on trade-related targets under Sustainable Development Goal 14. UNCTAD, FAO and UNEP also held an Oceans Forum in Geneva in March 2017 to discuss the implementation of the road map and preparations for the Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Ocean Conference). Further, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is currently revising and expanding its database on support measures for

[5] U. Rashid Sumaila and others (2016). Global fisheries subsidies: An updated estimate. *Marine Policy, 69*, 189-193.

fisheries with the explicit objective of supporting international objectives such as target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, target 14.6 reflects many of the same elements agreed upon under Aichi Biodiversity Target 6 on sustainable fisheries, which was adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010 as part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

III. Challenges and opportunities

19. Globally, there is an opportunity for rebuilding depleted fisheries, including through greater action on preventing, deterring and eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, decreasing fishing pressure and increasing environmental safeguards.

20. The ecosystem approach to fisheries management has been recognized in many parts of the world as integral to achieving sustainable fisheries while dealing with the increasingly complex challenges facing oceans and coastal zone development. The approach requires participation, collaboration, and continuous development and sharing of knowledge between sectors to achieve sustainable and adaptive fisheries management cycles. The socioeconomic valuation of fisheries management alternatives is a critical part of such an approach. Implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management needs to be strengthened at the national and regional level. Further dialogue is needed to exchange experiences and to identify appropriate fisheries management instruments for the implementation of the ecosystem approach at different levels.

21. The General Assembly, considers and reviews developments relating to sustainable fisheries and ocean affairs and the law of the sea on an annual basis, as the global institution having the competence to undertake such a review. In this context, the Assembly has played a central normative and policy-setting role through its resolutions, including in relation to fisheries. It has taken numerous actions to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement and has also addressed specific concerns, such as large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing on the high seas and unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction. More recently, the Assembly has undertaken a process to consider measures to address the adverse impacts of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems and the long-term sustainability of deep sea fish stocks, which has triggered important action by States, regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and FAO. In 2016, the Assembly conducted a further review of the actions taken by States and management organizations and arrangements, preceded by a two-day workshop, and a number of concrete recommendations were included in the latest Assembly resolution on sustainable fisheries as a result of that process (resolution 71/123).

22. A number of the General Assembly processes have also addressed sustainable fisheries, including the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. The Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects recently oversaw the completion of the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment.[4] The Assessment examines, inter alia, the status of the world's fisheries, as well as their socioeconomic aspects and can serve as a tool for informed decision-making at all levels.

23. The Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, adopted by the Conference of FAO in 1995, and its related instruments, provide a robust framework for national and international efforts, including in the formulation of policies and other legal and

institutional frameworks and instruments, to ensure sustainable fishing and use of aquatic living resources in harmony with the environment.

24. The Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, complementing the Code of Conduct and endorsed by the Committee on Fisheries of FAO in 2014, represent a global consensus on principles and guidance for small-scale fisheries governance and development towards enhanced food security and nutrition. The Guidelines seek to contribute to and improve the equitable development and socioeconomic condition of small-scale fishing communities alongside sustainable and responsible management of fisheries. There is already evidence of important steps taken in the implementation of the Guidelines, as there is increasing recognition of the need to address small-scale fisheries in a way commensurate with the reality of small-scale fishing communities and of the importance of participatory human rights-based approaches.

25. The Review Conference on the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks was convened in 2006, and reconvened in 2010 and in 2016, to assess the effectiveness of the Agreement in securing the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks by reviewing the adequacy of its provisions and, if necessary, proposing means of strengthening the implementation of those provisions. The recommendations adopted by the Review Conference have stimulated concrete action by States to improve the sustainability of high seas fisheries, including through the General Assembly, FAO and regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements.

26. Efforts to address overfishing and non-compliance and to support the effective implementation of regulations and management frameworks will continue to be challenged and in some cases, undermined, by factors such as the lack of science-based management, weak governance and institutional capacities, as well as low levels of data collection and analysis and monitoring capacity.

27. Measures to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing include the creation and maintenance of the list of vessels accused of, or caught engaging in, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, catch documentation and supply chain traceability programmes, and inspection and surveillance schemes. The implementation and coming into force of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing of FAO is expected to be a major advance in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing globally. Effective implementation of the Agreement will reduce the incentive to engage in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and block fishery products derived from such activities from entering national and international markets. The Agreement recognizes the need to provide assistance to developing States for adopting and implementing port State measures and requires parties to cooperate in establishing appropriate funding mechanisms so as to assist developing States in the implementation.

28. Financing gaps continue to pose challenges, including for sustainable fisheries management; monitoring, control and enforcement; stock assessment; capacity-building and for the introduction and scaling up of marine seafood (wild catch and aquaculture), as well as for the greening of seafood supply chains, including through certification schemes that provide opportunities to ensure environmental sustainability while creating market access.

29. Challenges in relation to fisheries subsidies include: fragmented and non-comparable information on State-supported practices relating to the fisheries

sector; the lack of official and reliable data on fisheries subsidies (including the lack of proper notification to WTO); the lack of consensus on how to deal with basic concepts and definitions, including on what constitutes "harmful" fisheries subsidies; the lack of agreement on how to create incentives for all nations with important fishing interests to fully engage in the negotiations; the low level of knowledge and understanding of the main international instruments covering fisheries within members of the trade community, leading to a lack of coordination and coherence between some trade negotiation officials and fisheries management agencies, resulting in unclear or contradictory policy positions; problems in defining content, sequencing and limits of special and differential treatment provisions to be included in new disciplines; and the lack of international agreement on how to address the interests and needs of traditional fisheries communities in fisheries subsidies disciplines and on whether this should apply to both developing and developed countries. Many of those issues have been addressed through stakeholder consultations, analysis and the development of technical solutions that can be built upon further. In addition, while the importance of the issue of fuel subsidies is widely acknowledged, the possibility of developing consensus approaches to such subsidies has been hampered both by the technical complexity of the issue and by political sensitivities.

30. A successful outcome from the ministerial meeting of WTO to be held in December 2017, would positively contribute to the 2030 Agenda by meeting the 2020 deadline set in target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In doing so, the development and livelihood needs of developing countries, the least developed countries and small island developing States need to be taken into consideration. It is also important to encourage the implementation of fisheries subsidies provisions in other trade agreements, including at the regional and bilateral levels, in a manner that contributes to target 14.6. As such, a need persists to build coherence and structured dialogue between the trade community, the environmental communities and the fisheries management communities.

31. National Governments, when undertaking internal reforms, should be encouraged to consider target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, regardless of whether there is advancement at the multilateral level. Existing fisheries subsidies could be redirected to support fisheries management or educate communities, among other beneficial effects.

32. In addition to global and national action, in line with the ecosystem approach, subregional and regional cooperation is an absolute necessity for sustainable management of fisheries and effective implementation of the relevant targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. Strengthening the effectiveness of reporting, monitoring and surveillance of fisheries subsidies at the global, regional and national levels could be an important foundation for fisheries subsidies negotiations and reform. Capacity-building and the provision of technical assistance play an important role in the implementation and realization of targets 14.4 and 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals, including, in this instance, in the regulation of trade in fisheries.

IV. Existing partnerships

34. A great number of partnerships cover various aspects of fisheries. More than 30 partnerships were mentioned in submissions put forward for the Conference,[6] involving a range of stakeholders and modalities.

35. As a first form of partnerships, groups of countries are cooperating to jointly manage their fisheries. An often-quoted example is that of the Vessel Day Scheme currently being implemented by Pacific Islands countries who are parties to the Nauru Agreement Concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The Scheme allows small island developing States to benefit from the tuna resources in their jurisdictions. The eight signatories[7] to the Agreement collectively control between 25 per cent to 30 per cent of the world's tuna supply and approximately 60 per cent of the western and central Pacific tuna supply. Joint fisheries management arrangements made by the parties have been concerned mainly with the management of tuna purse-seine fishing in the tropical western Pacific. Recent actions by the parties include a prohibition on setting purse seines around whale sharks, a ban on fishing near fish-aggregation devices during certain periods of the year, a requirement for 100 per cent observer coverage aboard purse seiners, a minimum mesh size and a requirement for retention of all catch of tuna on board. Agreement-specific measures are also supplemented by the harmonized minimum terms and conditions for access to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency member exclusive economic zones by foreign fishing vessels, agreed by all Forum member countries, including the parties to the Nauru Agreement. These terms and conditions apply to all foreign fishing vessels, not just purse-seiners, and include a requirement for an automatic location communicator to be switched on at all times and reporting to the regional vessel monitoring system, minimum standards for reporting to national authorities and a requirement for annual regional vessel registration.

36. Another type of partnership is broad-based in terms of issues and involves national Governments and other stakeholders. For example, the Coral Triangle Initiative on coral reefs, fisheries and food security has six member States (Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste) and development partners including the Governments of Australia and of the United States of America, the Asian Development Bank, the Global Environment Facility and non-governmental organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Nature Conservancy, Conservation International and the Coral Triangle Centre. The partnership has been expanded to include universities and regional organizations, and platforms have been established to engage with the private sector, empower women and strengthen local governments. The partnership has a 2020 regional plan of action that addresses fisheries management in relation to ecosystem approaches, along with conservation, marine protection and climate change adaptation issues.[8]

37. The advantages of closer coordination and synergizing between regional and international organizations have also become apparent. An example is the cooperation between regional seas conventions and action plans and regional fisheries bodies, such as the collective arrangement between the Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, and the memorandum of understanding between the

[6] See https://oceanconference.un.org/about.

[7] Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

[8] See www.coraltriangleinitiative.org/.

Mediterranean Action Plan and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, which prove to be useful in advancing ecosystem approaches. At the global level, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNEP, FAO and others are working to facilitate improved dialogue and collaboration across regional mechanisms through the Sustainable Ocean Initiative global dialogues with regional seas organizations and regional fisheries bodies on accelerating progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sustainable Development Goals, sponsored by Japan, the Republic of Korea and the European Commission. Through joint capacity-building activities, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora has established special cooperation and partnership agreements through resolutions or memorandums of understanding with other international organizations and agreements to address issues related to management of marine species listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Joint efforts are also being undertaken through FAO and the Convention on Biological Diversity to provide improved guidance and support for countries in achieving, and reporting progress on, global goals on sustainable fisheries and biodiversity.

38. United Nations system organizations are also involved in partnerships with other stakeholders, for instance, through the Global Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Programme (Common Oceans), which was approved by the Global Environment Facility under the lead of FAO and in close collaboration with UNEP and the World Bank. Other partners include Conservation International, the Global Ocean Forum, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Wildlife Fund. Additional partners include regional fisheries management organizations, the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, BirdLife International, the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, the Central America Fisheries and Aquaculture Organization and the parties to the Nauru Agreement. Focusing on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, capacity-building and ocean partnerships, in parallel with the conservation of biodiversity, the Common Oceans programme seeks to promote efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction to achieve the global targets agreed in international forums.

39. There are currently a number of partnerships supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Port State Measures, which include States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, regional fishery bodies and others. FAO has recently formulated a global capacity development umbrella programme on support for the implementation of that Agreement and complementary instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The five-year programme is country-led and aims to enhance the capacity of developing countries in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, by strengthening their policy, legal and operational frameworks in line with the Agreement and other relevant international instruments and regional schemes. The establishment of an appropriate funding mechanism under article 21 of the Agreement will assist developing States' efforts in its implementation.

40. International non-governmental organizations have worked to support developing countries to manage their fisheries and are also spearheading partnerships in relation to the social and environmental issues around fisheries, and on sustainable consumption and production in relation to fish and marine products. For example, in 2014, Conservation International initiated a year-long effort, coordinating a global research group with members representing academic institutions, industry and non-profit organizations to identify the major social issues

associated with the global seafood industry. Conservation International is also part of the Coalition for Socially Responsible Seafood, which gathers several non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic research institutions, bilateral development agencies and business partners.

41. Apart from the innovative initiative launched at the fourteenth session of UNCTAD and currently being spearheaded by FAO, UNCTAD and UNEP (see para. 18, above), very few partnerships focusing on harmful fisheries subsidies seem to exist. There is also a lack of studies documenting the effectiveness and impact of existing partnerships in this area as a whole (i.e., beyond individual partnerships).

V. Possible areas of new partnerships

42. The following areas were indicated as promising for the development of new partnerships in submissions made for the preparatory process of the Conference:

(a) Partnerships with resource-users such as small-scale fishing organizations, including support for their capacity development to allow them to effectively participate in governance and development processes;

(b) Public-private partnerships can promote the development of infrastructure and technical innovation with respect to sustainable fisheries management;

(c) International non-governmental organizations working with the fishing industry in developing countries to help them achieve certification standards, such as the Marine Stewardship Council certification, address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and establish sustainable domestic and international supply chains;

(d) Partnership between United Nations entities and stakeholders working on marine ecosystems;

(e) Partnerships between United Nations system organizations, academic institutions and research centres to promote the development of assessment methods and harvest strategies;

(f) Potential for increased regional research collaboration;

(g) Partnerships with relevant national authorities, United Nations entities, regional fisheries management organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations working to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

(h) Partnerships to promote awareness and capacity-building directed at improving implementation of the international legal framework for sustainable fisheries, including as contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement;

(i) Opportunities for strengthening collaboration at the regional level, including between regional fisheries management organizations, regional seas conventions, where appropriate, and the broader regional economic communities such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Caribbean Community, the Southern African Development Community and, also, the Indian Ocean Commission by linking fisheries management to cross-cutting management instruments such as marine spatial planning, including through global-level dialogue across regional mechanisms;

(j) Possibility of promoting better links between the European Union yellow/red card system, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Appendices and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Act-listed species criteria, in order to enhance the understanding of thresholds for fisheries sanctions and thresholds for threatened fisheries provisions;

(k) Partnerships for developing and updating global data standards for fisheries and aquaculture;

(l) Partnerships to enhance the sharing of information, experience and good practices on the implementation of sustainable fisheries standards (e.g., FLUX standard), which will contribute to internationally harmonized processes for sustainable fisheries management;

(m) Partnerships between relevant United Nations system organizations and international development institutions to study fisheries value chains and the use of sustainability standards;

(n) At the national level, partnerships with private sector actors could support Governments in identifying harmful subsidies mentioned in target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals and document their ecological and socioeconomic impact on economies, fisheries and international markets; partnerships with national statistical offices and relevant fisheries bodies could help improve the reporting on subsidies to address data gaps;

(o) Deeper cooperation between United Nations entities, trade agencies and other organizations to gather and analyse existing data on fisheries subsidies and public support measures;

(p) Partnerships between United Nations agencies to support countries in their efforts to reform trade policies, including fisheries subsidies;

(q) In order to foster advances in international negotiations at WTO, it was proposed to foster partnerships with regional initiatives and entities (including regional fishery bodies), especially those incorporating developing countries and small island developing States, so as to assist them in better understanding the issues at stake and in providing necessary inputs to the negotiations;

(r) It was suggested that the Global Environment Facility, in its next phase (2018-2022), should seek to explicitly include provisions for financial support to developing countries for technical assistance and capacity-building, to help them incorporate new rules on fisheries subsidies into relevant national and regional policy and legislation, and build capacity for monitoring, compliance and enforcement;

(s) The strengthening of existing partnerships, building on existing cooperation platforms, such as existing cooperation between regional seas and regional fisheries management organizations, existing science-policy interface platforms and informal cooperation platforms between regional and international bodies and non-governmental organizations and business could be envisioned, with a specific focus on the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 14, related to sustainable fisheries management.

VI. Guiding questions for the dialogue

(a) How can successful multi-country and multi-stakeholder partnerships focusing on fisheries management be replicated or advanced?

(b) In advancing the implementation of target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, regional and global levels, what type of partnerships could be put in place to curb illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on the high seas and in situations where monitoring and surveillance capacity is limited or to address harmful fisheries subsidies?

(c) What role could partnerships play to address overfishing, including through the development and implementation of science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield, as determined by their biological characteristics?

(d) How can businesses be more involved, and stakeholder cooperation in general be increased, to facilitate the design of innovative systems, techniques and practices for achieving sustainable fisheries?